

CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method for providing a secure time reference, comprising ~~the~~ steps of:
 - a) generating a clock signal at a source;
 - b) encrypting said clock signal;
 - c) transmitting said encrypted clock signal to a remote content playing apparatus;
 - d) receiving said encrypted clock signal at said remote content playing apparatus;
 - e) decrypting said encrypted clock signal at said remote content playing apparatus;
 - and,
 - f) altering the playability of content on said remote content playing apparatus by reference to said clock signal and a set of timing playback constraints specific to said content.
2. (Currently Amended) The[[A]] method as described in Claim 1, wherein said clock signal comprises a date signal.
3. (Currently Amended) The[[A]] method as described in Claim 1, wherein said clock signal comprises a time-of-day signal.
4. (Currently Amended) The[[A]] method as described in Claim 1, wherein said clock signal is encrypted by use of a process comprising a private key.

5. (Currently Amended) The[[A]] method as described in Claim 1, further comprising ~~the~~ ~~step of~~ said remote content playing apparatus transmitting a query code to said source and wherein said query code is encrypted by use of a process comprising a public key.
6. (Currently Amended) The[[A]] method as described in Claim 1, wherein said ~~step of~~ transmitting said encrypted clock signal by said source is in response to a transmitted query.
7. (Currently Amended) The[[A]] method as described in Claim 1, wherein said ~~step of~~ transmitting said encrypted clock signal is done by use of a process comprising use of the internet.
8. (Currently Amended) The[[A]] method as described in Claim 1, wherein said ~~step of~~ transmitting said encrypted clock signal is done by use of a process comprising satellite technology.
9. (Currently Amended) The[[A]] method as described in Claim 1, wherein said ~~step of~~ transmitting said encrypted clock signal is done by use of a process comprising use of a telephone system.
10. (Currently Amended) The[[A]] method as described in Claim 1, wherein said ~~step of~~ receiving said encrypted clock signal at said remote content playing apparatus is done by use of a process comprising use of the internet.
11. (Currently Amended) The[[A]] method as described in Claim 1, wherein ~~said step of~~ receiving said encrypted clock signal at said remote content playing apparatus is done by use of a process comprising use of satellite technology.

12. (Currently Amended) The[[A]] method as described in Claim 1, wherein said ~~step of~~ receiving of said encrypted clock signal at said remote content playing apparatus is done by use of a process comprising use of a telephone system.

13. (Currently Amended) The[[A]] method as described in Claim 1, wherein said clock signal is decrypted at said remote content playing apparatus by use of a process comprising use of a public key.

14. (Currently Amended) The[[A]] method as described in Claim 1, wherein said content comprises intellectual property protected by copyright.

15. (Currently Amended) A source apparatus capable of transmitting a clock signal comprising:

a) [[c))] a clock signal source device capable of generating said clock signal, and wherein said clock signal comprises a date signal;

b) [[d))] an encryption device, coupled with said source device, wherein said encryption device is capable of encrypting said clock signal; and,

c) [[e))] a transmitting device, coupled with said source device and said encryption device, wherein said transmitting device is capable of transmitting said encrypted clock signal to a remote content playing apparatus in response to a time query therefrom.

16. (Currently Amended) The[[A]]source apparatus as described in Claim 15, wherein said encryption device is capable of encrypting said clock signal by use of a process comprising a private key.

17. (Currently Amended) The[[A]]source apparatus as described in Claim 15, wherein said source apparatus further comprises a query receiving device capable of receiving and decrypting said time query.

18. (Currently Amended) The[[A]]source apparatus as described in Claim 15, wherein said transmitting device is capable of transmitting said encrypted clock signal by use of a process comprising use of the internet.

19. (Currently Amended) The[[A]]source apparatus as described in Claim 15, wherein said transmitting device is capable of transmitting said encrypted clock signal by use of a process comprising use of satellite technology.

20. (Currently Amended) The[[A]]source apparatus as described in Claim 15, wherein said transmitting device is capable of transmitting said encrypted clock signal by use of a process comprising use of a telephone system.

21. (Currently Amended) A receiving apparatus, comprising:

- a) a receiving device capable of receiving a transmitted, encrypted, clock signal from an external source, and wherein said clock signal comprises a date signal;

- b) a decryption device, coupled with said receiving device, wherein said decryption device is capable of decrypting said clock signal; and,
- c) a content playing device capable of rendering digitized content;

wherein said content playing device is adapted to control the playback of said content by reference to said clock signal and to a set of time constraints pertinent to said content.

22. (Currently Amended) The[[A]]receiving apparatus as described in Claim 21, wherein said content playing apparatus further comprises a query code source device capable of generating and transmitting a time query code.

23. (Currently Amended) The[[A]]receiving apparatus as described in Claim 21, wherein said receiving device is capable of receiving said encrypted clock signal by use of a process comprising use of the internet.

24. (Currently Amended) The[[A]]receiving apparatus as described in Claim 21, wherein said receiving device is capable of receiving said encrypted clock signal by use of a process comprising use of satellite technology.

25. (Currently Amended) The[[A]]receiving apparatus as described in Claim 21, wherein said receiving device is capable of receiving said encrypted clock signal by use of a process comprising use of a telephone system.

26. (Currently Amended) The[[A]]receiving apparatus as described in Claim 21, wherein said decryption device is capable of decrypting said clock signal by use of a process comprising a private key.

27. (Currently Amended) The[[A]]receiving apparatus as described in Claim 21, wherein said content playing device is adapted to alter the playback of said content by reference to said clock signal and to said set of time constraints.

28. (Currently Amended) A system for controlling the playback of content by use of a time reference signal comprising:

a) a source apparatus capable of transmitting a clock signal, said source apparatus further comprising:

a1) a clock signal source device capable of generating said clock signal, and wherein said clock signal comprises a date signal;

a2) an encryption device, coupled with said source device, wherein said encryption device is capable of encrypting said clock signal;

a3) a transmitting device, coupled with said source device and said encryption device, wherein said transmitting device is capable of transmitting said encrypted clock signal to a remote content playing apparatus; and,

a4) a query receiving device capable of receiving and decrypting a remote time query.

b) a receiving apparatus, communicatively coupled with said source apparatus, wherein said receiving apparatus is capable of receiving a clock signal, and wherein said receiving apparatus comprises:

- b1) a receiving device;
- b2) a decryption device, coupled with said receiving device; and,
- b3) a content playing device, coupled with said receiving device and with said decryption device,

wherein said receiving apparatus is adapted to receive and decrypt a clock signal and wherein said content playing device is adapted to control the playback of content by reference to said clock signal and to time constraints pertinent to said content.

29. (Currently Amended) The[[A]]system as described in Claim 28, wherein said source apparatus is adapted to encrypt said clock signal by use of a process comprising a private key technique.

30. (Currently Amended) The[[A]]system as described in Claim 28, wherein said source apparatus is adapted to decrypt said time query code by use of a process comprising a public key technique.

31. (Currently Amended) The[[A]]system as described in Claim 28, wherein said source apparatus is adapted to transmit said clock signal in response to said time query code.

32. (Currently Amended) The[[A]]system as described in Claim 28, wherein said source apparatus is adapted to transmit said encrypted clock signal by use of a process comprising use of the internet.

33. (Currently Amended) The[[A]]system as described in Claim 28, wherein said source apparatus is adapted to transmit said encrypted clock signal by use of a process comprising satellite technology.